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DASH7 Alliance Forms to Advance Active RFID Standard

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March 24, 2009—More than 20 RFID vendors, users and researchers formed the DASH7 Alliance to facilitate use of the existing ISO 18000-7 active RFID standard, which is currently

mostly used in the defense industry. Alliance members want to iron out technical and interoperability issues to facilitate the standard being adopted for wider use in the commercial sector.

“The standard itself does not equate to interoperability,” Pat Burns of Savi, one of the founding members of the DASH7 Alliance, told RFID Update. “It’s like the early days of the 802.11 [wireless networking] standard, when products from different vendors complied with the standard, but didn’t talk to each other.”

ISO 18000-7 was developed as a 433 MHz active RFID technology standard for item management applications. It supports RFID read and write transactions and has a range of about 300 feet. There are several “ambiguities” with the standard, according to Burns, which the Alliance hopes to address through suggested revisions it plans to develop and submit to the ISO. The technical work required centers on encryption, tag-to-tag communications and other aspects that impact interoperability.

The University of Pittsburgh RFID Center of Excellence currently certifies that products conform to the ISO 18000-7 standard and is a founding member of the DASH7 Alliance. In the future, the Alliance would like to develop an interoperability certification program with the university.

The DASH7 Alliance will also promote the use of technology based on the standard, which it asserts is advantageous compared to the ZigBee standard for a variety of emerging wireless applications. In its announcement, the DASH7 Alliance says ISO 18000-7 technology can be used for cargo seals, asset tracking, advanced sensor networking, integration with mobile phones and more.

“The demand for this technology right now is heavily skewed to the defense sector,” Burns said. “The U.S. Department of Defense has spent about half a billion dollars on active RFID

in the last 10 years, almost all of it on 18000-7-based technology.” He noted that a recent DoD RFID III contract award calls for 18000-7 technology. See more about the DoD’s plans here.

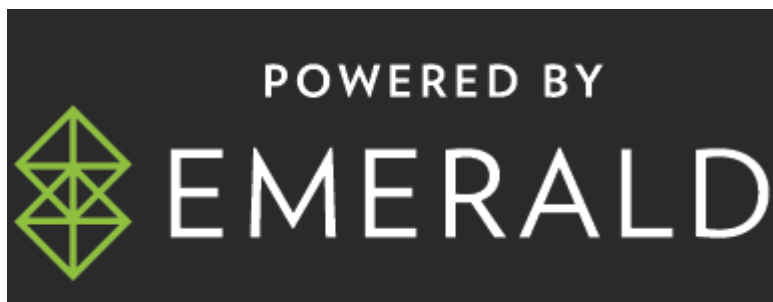
DASH7 membership is open to interested parties. The organization plans to present briefings for end users and technology developers in Korea and Japan in April, and has scheduled a quarterly members meeting for May 5-6 in Washington, DC. It has already posted various background resources and technical documentation about 18000-7 technology on its website.



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